

## Message Text

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14  
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01

IO-13 /073 W

----- 066567

P R 011020Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8520

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMCONSUL GOTEBOG

USMISSION USNATO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SW

SUBJECT: SWEDISH ELECTIONS: AUGUST POLL INDICATES OPPOSITION  
PARTIES CONTINUE TO LEAD BUT WITH REDUCED MARGIN

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. SUMMARY. THE FIRST PUBLIC OPINION POLL  
SINCE JUNE OF POLITICAL PARTY PREFERENCE FOR THE  
SEPTEMBER 19 ELECTIONS INDICATES THE THREE OPPOSITION  
OR NON-SOCIALIST PARTIES CONTINUE THEIR LEAD IN VOTER  
SYMPATHY (51 PERCENT) OVER THE SOCIALIST BLOCK  
(47 PERCENT), BUT THE GAP HAS NARROWED SINCE  
THE JUNE FIGURES OF 53.5 PERCENT AND 44.5 PERCENT.  
RESPECTIVELY. END SUMMARY.

2. THE HIGHLY-RESPECTED SIBO POLL (WHICH ALONE  
FORECAST THE 1975-175 RIKSDAG RESULT IN 1973)  
PUBLISHED ITS EAGERLY-AWAITED AUGUST POLL RESULTS ON  
AUGUST 31. THEY SHOW THAT PALME'S SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, AS  
EXPECTED, HAVE CUT FURTHER INTO THE SUBSTANTIAL LEAD  
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ENJOYED BY THE THREE OPPOSITION PARTIES THROUGHOUT THE

FIRST HALF OF 1976 . SDP GAINS FROM 40.5 TO 42.5 PERCENT ADDED TO VPK (COMMUNIST) GAINS FROM 4 TO 4.5 PERCENT, COMBINED WITH A NET LOSS FOR THE OPPOSITION OF 2-1/2 PERCENTAGE POINTS. REPRESENT A TOTAL SWING OF FIVE PERCENTAGE POINTS IN FAVOR OF THE SOCIALIST BLOCK SINCE THE JUNE POLL.

3. THE AUGUST POLL FIGURES WERE AS FOLLOWS (WITH COMPARISONS TO JUNE 1976, AUGUST 1973 AND ACTUAL 1973 ELECTION RESULTS):

	AUGUST 1976	JUNE 1976	AUGUST 1973	ELECTION 1973
MODERATE PARTY	17	19	14.5	14.3
LIBERAL PARTY	12	13	11	9.4
CENTER PARTY	22	21.5	25	25.1
SOCIAL DEMO-CRATIC PARTY	42.5	40.5	41	43.6
VPK	4.5	4	5.5	5.3
OTHERS	2	2	3	
NO PREFERENCE	2.5	3.5	6	

#### MODERATE

#### SOCIAL DEMO-

#### NO

4. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. COMMENT: THE LATEST PARTY PREFERENCE FIGURES REINFORCED THE GENRAL VIEW IN SWEDEN THAT THE RESULTS OF THE SEPTEMBER 19 CONTEST WILL BE EXTREMELY CLOSE WITH CONTROL OF THE NEXT GOVERNMENT A MATTER OF A HANDFUL OF SEATS MAJORITY IN THE RIKSDAG. POLITICAL LEADERS HAVE YET TO COMMENT ON THE SIFO POLL, BUT EMBASSY BELIEVES THERE IS REASON FOR ALL PARTIES TO BE LESS THAN PLEASED WITH RESULTS, EXCEPT PERHAPS THE COMMUNIST VPK. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, WHOSE PARTY AND TRADE UNION MACHINES ARE IN THE MIDST OF THEIR GREATEST ELECTION EFFORT IN HISTROY, MAY BE A BIT CONCERNED THAT THEIR GAIN OVER THE PAST THREE MONTHS HAS BEEN A MERE TWO PERCENTAGE POINTS. AT THE SAME TIME, THE SDP MUST VIEW WITH SOME RELIEF THE HALF PERCENTAGE POINT GAIN REGISTERED BY THE VPK SINCE, SHOULD THE COMMUNIST TOTAL OF 4.5 PERCENT BE REFLECTED IN THE ACTUAL ELECTION

RESULT, THE COMMUNISTS WILL BE REPRESENTED AGAIN IN THE RIKSDAG AND WILL BE ABLE TO LEND REQUIRED PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT TO THE SDP IN THE BATTLE TO RETAIN GOVERNMENT CONTROL. WITHOUT SUCH VPK SUPPORT, OF COURSE, IT IS WIDELY ASSUMED THAT THE SDP'S 44-YEAR REIGN OF GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP WILL END, AT LEAST TEMPORARILY.

5. SHARING THE GREATEST DISAPPOINTMENT PERHAPS ARE THE LIBERAL AND MODERATE (CONSERVATIVE) PARTIES WHOSE LEADERS, PER AHLMARK AND GOSTA BOHMAN, RESPECTIVELY, HAVE LED WELL-ORGANIZED, WELL-PUBLICIZED CAMPAIGNS BUT WHO NEVERTHELESS HAVE SEEN THEIR SUPPORT DROP IN THE THREE MONTHS SINCE JUNE. AHLMARK, PARTICULARLY, WHO HAS SURFACED AS ONE OF THE MOST STRINGING AND EFFECTIVE CRITICS OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS IN THE CAMPAIGN, MUST VIEW HIS PARTY'S LOSS (TO 12 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL) AS A BITTER PILL.

6. THE NEXT AND LAST SIFO POLL WILL BE RELEASED JUST BEFORE THE ELECTIONS ON SEPTEMBER 19. THE FASCINATING QUESTION WILL BE WHETHER THE NON-SOCIALISTS CAN MAINTAIN THEIR PRESENT FOUR PERCENT LEAD OVER THE SDP AND THE VPK OR WHETHER THE EXPERIENCE OF 1973 WILL BE REPEATED WHEN THE SOCIALIST BLOCK JUST BARELY OVERCAME A SIMILAR OPPOSITION FOUR PERCENT LEAD IN THE LAST THREE WEEKS OF THE CAMPAIGN.  
SMITH

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** REPORTS, ELECTIONS, PUBLIC OPINION POLLS, POLITICAL SITUATION  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 01 SEP 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** coburnhl  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976STOCKH04736  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760331-0956  
**From:** STOCKHOLM  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t197609100/aaaadhuz.tel  
**Line Count:** 143  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION EUR  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** coburnhl  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 07 APR 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <07 APR 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <29 JUL 2004 by coburnhl>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** SWEDISH ELECTIONS: AUGUST POLL INDICATES OPPOSITION PARTIES CONTINUE TO LEAD BUT WITH REDUCED MARGIN  
**TAGS:** PINT, SW  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006